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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND FORTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 6 June 1990, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. JANKOWITSCH (Austria)

- General exchange of views (continued)
- Statement by the Chairman
- Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mrs. PELLICER (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Mexico wishes to express its pleasure, Sir, at seeing you once again chairing the work of this Committee. We are sure that under your leadership we shall make further progress in the promotion of genuine international co-operation in outer space.

In recent months we have witnessed great advances in the conquest of space. The launching of the cosmic background radiation Explorer and the placing in orbit of the Hubble telescope mark the beginning of a new era in astronomical research and provide clear proof of man's genius in the conquest of outer space.

During your interesting and detailed opening statement, Mr. Chairman, we listened with great attention to your account of the exploits of several countries in the area of space co-operation, giving proof of the fact that with political will we can make progress in the use and exploration of outer space.

We are holding this session of the Committee at a time when the improvement in East-West relations and the ongoing dialogue between the two super-Powers are making an enormous contribution to the improvement of the international political situation. To consolidate a system of international peace and security, it is essential to achieve simultaneous progress in North-South relations by means of organizing genuine international co-operation for development.

When it comes to establishing international machinery for co-operation, this Committee can make its modest contribution if we work seriously and responsibly on the promotion of international co-operation in outer space with the aim of ensuring that all States can benefit from the exploration and use of outer space. First and foremost let us stress the fact that for this it is absolutely essential to keep

(Mrs. Pellicer, Mexico)

outer space free from military confrontation and curb its growing militarization. Any progress we achieve in this regard will have a favourable effect on our efforts to promote international space co-operation.

It is against this background that the delegation of Mexico attaches high priority to the analysis of the item entitled "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". The inclusion of this item on our agenda as a priority item reflects the concern of the international community over the militarization of outer space. Our deliberations on this item should serve as encouragement to the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, which is the only multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament.

Among the items on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, those related to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications are those that are most directly concerned with the means of strengthening international space co-operation. That is why my delegation has read with great interest the section of the Sub-Committee's report concerning this Programme. We are pleased to see that since the last session some States Members and organizations have made offers of additional contributions. However, the Programme is still far from having resolved its problem of meagre financial resources; until these resources are increased significantly it will be difficult for the Programme to have any impact on progress, particularly in the developing countries, especially in the application of space technology to the various areas of economic activity. Although we are aware of these limitations, we nevertheless wish to express our gratitude for the workshops, training courses, seminars and expert meetings that have been organized by the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 1990 and 1991. We believe that these courses and seminars, together with the International Space Information Service that is being set up by the Outer Space

(Mrs. Pellicer, Mexico)

Affairs Division, will contribute to the aim of promoting the use of space technology for enhancing the progress and well-being of mankind.

With regard to the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE 82, my delegation has read with interest the report of the working group that met to improve the execution of activities of international co-operation. My delegation fully supports the measures proposed by the group, in particular that the United Nations Programme should continue to be essentially a long-term programme and geared to on-the-job training for the execution of space technology projects as well as specific applications of that technology, above all, progress made in satellite systems, programmes of remote sensing and the use of systems of digital processing, as well as training for the management of earth stations.

My delegation also fully supports the suggestion that the priority studies recommended by UNISPACE 82 should include information from different reports and that new information be compiled so that State Members can benefit from the broadest possible studies. We also support the idea that, on the basis of the results obtained from such studies, further studies be prepared that will more specifically illustrate the possible uses of space technology. The list of new studies proposed by the working group seems to us very thought-provoking and of great usefulness to the developing countries.

As far as the Legal Sub-Committee is concerned, we have repeatedly stated that our delegation attaches great importance to the consideration of the legal aspects of the application of the legal principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of the developing countries. If we set up an appropriate legal framework to ensure that in our exploitation of outer space we do not lose sight of the need of those countries, this will help us

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(Mrs. Pellicer, Mexico)

to ensure not only a fair distribution of the benefits resulting from activities in outer space but also a more effective distribution of the resources devoted to those activities.

We regret the fact that it has not been possible to make speedier progress in the work on this urgent task of the Legal Sub-Committee's agenda, but we are pleased and very much encouraged to see that the beginning of the work of the group entrusted with this subject has been decided for 1991, and we wish it success.

(Mrs. Pellicer, Mexico)

With respect to the elaboration of draft principles relevant to the use of nuclear power sources in outer space, my delegation is pleased that the working group reached consensus on a text containing guidelines and criteria for safe use of nuclear power sources. In accordance with those guidelines, and with a view to minimizing the quantity of radioactive material in space and the risks involved, the use of nuclear power sources in outer space shall be restricted, inter alia, to those space missions which cannot be reasonably operated by non-nuclear energy sources. States launching space objects with nuclear power sources on board shall endeavour to protect individuals, populations and the biosphere against radiological hazards. The design and use of space objects with nuclear power sources on board shall ensure, with a high degree of confidence, that the hazards, in foreseeable operational or accidental circumstances, are kept below acceptalbe levels, as defined by the working group.

We congratulate the working group that prepared the consensus text and we hope that it will soon be possible to reach further agreements on remaining points.

The work of the Legal Sub-Committee ought in the near future to include items whose consideration has been postponed, such as the question of space debris, the strengthening of the convention on registration and the means to achieve universal application of the legal régime for outer space. My delegation will speak on this subject more fully in its statement on agenda item 6.

I would not want to conclude without stating our concern that interest in the Committee's work is diminishing. We have fallen short in our endeavour to prevent the advance of the militarization of outer space; we have been unable to accelerate the work of the Legal Sub-Committee on items of particular interest to developing countries; and, above all, we do not see the emergence of a genuine spirit of international co-operation that would make it truly possible to utilize space

(Mrs. Pellicer, Mexico)

technologies to assist the economic, scientific and technical progress of developing countries.

The times require a change of attitude. Let us work to ensure that this Committee shares the spirit of co-operation prevailing in other areas of the United Nations.

Mr. DRAWER (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation is honoured, Sir, that your are presiding once again over the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We are certain that with your proven experience and ability the thirty-third session will mark significant gains on items of common concern. We wish also to convey to the other Committee officers and to the members of the Secretariat our pleasure at their presence and their assistance in making documents available and in providing support for our meetings.

The delegation of Colombia reffirms that it observes the principle of the peaceful uses of outer space. In that connection we are ready to consider as a priority matter ways and means to preserve outer space for purely peaceful purposes. We consider that the special atmosphere of understanding now enfolding the international community can only help consolidate the components of international co-operation.

This principle of the peaceful uses of outer space draws strength not only from the political will to realize it but also from respect for other principles such as equality and mutual benefit for all States. Nothing could be more suitable than to inject new values into the use of outer space, promoting such activities as those connected with biology, space medicine, meteorology, communications, physics and remote sensing. In the latter field, we can envisage the future use of this technology in the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the guiding principles in this area, as

(Mr. Drawer, Colombia)

currently being discussed in the working group of the Special Committee on Peace-Keeping Operations.

My delegation welcomes the progress made in recent space missions dedicated to planetary science and astronomy; in the coming decade and in the next century, this will add an unanticipated dimension to the quality of life and the security of mankind. The launching of the radar-equipped cartographic satellite Magellan, the Galileo probe and the Hubble space telescope indicate the continuing progress being made in that direction.

With respect to the report of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, we consider that its contents reflect the Sub-Committee's debate, including the views of certain delegations on matters traditionally considered both in that body and in the Legal Sub-Committee, and the scientific and technical agreements that have been adopted on the uses of nuclear power sources and the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 82). Yet differences remain on the danger of saturation, the competence of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the physical character and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit.

We believe that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is an essentially political body which must lay down guidelines on what the use of outer space should be and what it should include, and on the advisability of specifying the technical issues relating to the nature and use of the synchronous geostationary orbit, because these are directly related to the work of the Committee's organs and define the work of international technical entities. We therefore consider it appropriate to plumb deeper into these subjects to lay the foundation for a legal régime that would meet the interests of the international community. Further study is also required on the problem of space debris, for it is clear that the risk of saturation is growing daily and that incidents in space

(Mr. Drawer, Colombia)

and on Earth are rising as space activities rise. That is why it is vital that space be used rationally.

My delegation wishes also to refer to agenda item 6, "Report of the Legal Sub-Committee on the work of its twenty-ninth session", to which we attach great significance. We agree it is necessary to continue consideration of the legal aspects related to the application of the principle that the exploration and utilization of outer space should be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries. The criteria for the consideration of this subject are rightly of great interest, because we are aiming to give full meaning to international co-operation to create a basic indigenous capacity in space science and technology in order to institutionalize the exchange of information, data and material and easy access to and availability of the benefits of progress in this field. The thorough report on this item, pages 9 to 15 of the report, reflects the international community's interest in the consideration of what has been called the new topic. This contrasts with the relegation to an annex of the discussion of items relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, which are found on pages 24 to 30 of the report. For reasons we cannot understand these were not deemed to merit placement in the main body of the report along with other items.

(Mr. Drawer, Colombia)

The Colombian delegation attaches importance to the need for continued positive exchange of opinions on the questions of the geostationary orbit. Such exchange has made it possible to identify a new spirit of understanding and a desire on the part of all States to develop concepts to define such an important issue. In that spirit, we wish to express our interest in retaining the analysis of the elements contained in the so-called "Informal Working Paper", which contains the principles of the peaceful use and development of space science and technology applied to the use of the geostationary orbit as a factor for economic, social and cultural development. The Paper also recognizes the orbit as a limited natural resource and mentions the need to use it as efficiently and sparingly as possible, taking into particular account the needs of the developing countries and countries in a special geographical situation, such as the equatorial countries.

The exchange of views did not give rise to a consensus, but we do hope that in that new spirit of understanding we will gradually move towards a definition of that subject and towards a legal régime that will meet the interests of the international community. My delegation is prepared to co-operate so that we can make the maximum gains at this session in that field.

Mr. RABAZA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): Once again, the delegation of Cuba welcomes your presence, Sir, at the head of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We are certain that under your wise guidance we will achieve the objectives set for this session.

For Cuba, the role played by the United Nations towards genuine use of outer space solely for peaceful purposes is of capital importance. The work of the Committee is taking place at a time when mankind is faced with acute political, economic and social problems, among which the use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes and prevention of the dangerous extension of the arms race to outer space are of great importance.

(Mr. Rabaza, Cuba)

The opportunity for destructive uses offered by space technology is one of the most dangerous challenges facing mankind at present. Mankind sees our planet with a deep understanding not only of its small size in the immensity of the universe but also of our common destiny as human beings. That is why the greatest irony of our times is that, despite our awareness of the links that bind us as members of the human race, there are States that intend to use outer space to deny the existence of those bonds. To consider outer space as another area for conflict would be the greatest injustice that man could commit against his fellow men.

That is why our delegation supports the idea that the development of international co-operation in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space should be considered in the broad political and legal context of the struggle to ensure a peaceful outer space. It is precisely for that reason that the Committee should not exclude itself from the quest for effective ways and means of preventing an arms race in outer space.

In parallel with the ongoing development of space activities, the work of the Committee and its two Sub-Committees is also part of the history of the space era. Our task is proof of the international community's efforts to ensure that the exploration and utilization of outer space are carried out in accordance with international law for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, whatever their degree of economic, technological or scientific development.

In that respect, my delegation cannot disregard the fact that great efforts are being made to achieve international co-operation in outer space, including the role being played by the United Nations. However, international co-operation in outer space still leaves much to be desired. Hence the majority of small, poor and underdeveloped countries, and even those that are more developed, are virtually set aside and excluded from important space activities that they require for their economic, technological, scientific and cultural progress. Only in co-operation

(Mr. Rabaza, Cuba)

and international collaboration can they be guaranteed access to the costly infrastructure and sophisticated technology they require.

Our delegation notes the efforts and work carried out by the Outer Space Affairs Division and the Expert on Space Applications in the organization and promotion of training seminars, technical and other assistance to the most needy countries. Unfortunately, despite the generous assistance of some countries that have hosted courses and seminars, the financial limitations have not made it possible for the results to be commensurate with the magnitude of what was agreed at UNISPACE 82 nor with the efforts exerted.

By way of contribution to the United Nations Programme on Space Applications, and as part of the international efforts to promote greater co-operation in space science and technology, in particular among developing countries, a regional workshop was organized in Cuba last March on space communications for development. The organization of that type of event is a positive contribution to the development of international co-operation, and we urge other countries to support the Outer Space Affairs Division in its organization of such activities. In addition, our Government is ready to continue to co-operate with the Committee in the organization of workshops, seminars, practical and other courses, and so on, in our country.

The organization in Cuba in 1992 of an international symposium on remote sensing, on the occasion of the celebration of International Space Year, will be an excellent opportunity to organize a United Nations workshop on remote sensing applications for the benefit of the developing countries.

Space activities in our country are moving forward basically through international co-operation based on our own development efforts. In space physics, we have placed special stress on the study of near space and we are actively participating in various projects to study the Earth magnetosphere and the

(Mr. Rabaza, Cuba)

Sun-Earth relations. With the design and construction of equipment for automatic spacecraft, our country has gone on to a further stage of development with regard to the construction of technologically sophisticated equipment.

With respect to remote sensing of the Earth, Cuban specialists have participated in international projects of the member countries of the Intercosmos programme. In our country, important scientific and practical results have also been achieved in the areas of geology and agriculture, in the study of the continental shelf, botany, and so on. We consider that the results achieved in Cuba in those areas may be very useful for other developing countries.

In the areas already mentioned and in communications, biology and medicine, meteorology and materials science in space, we are pursuing the implementation of projects that include - as in the case of materials science - the design of equipment for the growth of organic material. All this is contributing to the socio-economic growth of our country and is an important basis for international co-operation.

My delegation fully supports the opinion expressed by the majority of countries to the effect that the international community has the right and the responsibility to participate in the elaboration of norms and regulations to govern co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space in the interests of all States. The legal norms and other understandings and measures of co-operation should ensure the application of the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, as well as the right of each people to free and independent development.

In the light of those ideas, we have attentively followed the progress made in preparing a set of principles on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space.

(Mr. Rabaza, Cuba)

In addition to being a developing country, we have a special geographical position. For that reason, Cuba is particularly concerned by the consequences of the uncontrolled re-entry of space objects with nuclear power sources on board, as well as by the accidents that might occur during launching or in the early stages of flight.

(Mr. Rabaza, Cuba)

We consider that the problem of the definition and delimitation of outer space should be solved in the immediate future, because the stalemate over the matter in the Committee for several years is blocking progress on outer space agreements.

Cuba believes that an unacceptable barrier to international co-operation is created by the use of sophisticated technology, including space technology, in a way that does not contribute to establishing or strengthening friendly relations between peoples, that does not foster mutual understanding or that violates the sovereignty of States and international conventions. It is also a serious threat to peace in regions where such a situation prevails.

One of the agenda items to be considered is that relating to the geostationary orbit. The Cuban delegation wishes to reiterate the need for the establishment of a legal régime for the orbit, in accordance with existing space law. Since the orbit is a limited natural resource, the régime should guarantee its rational and equitable use by all States, bearing in mind the needs of the developing countries, so that those countries may exercise that right when they have the material means to do so.

My delegation also condemns utilization of the geostationary orbit by the United States Government as part of its ostentatious display of high technology, which includes the use of two geostationary satellites, earth stations for satellite communication and a captive balloon, among other things, to take over one of our national radio wavelengths, used by a Cuban broadcasting station, by beginning in the early morning of 27 March this year transmissions of a television service directed exclusively at Cuba.

That action, denounced by many Governments and by the International Telecommunications Union, represented here, is unacceptable, for the following reasons: it is a violation of our national sovereignty; the use of artificial

(Mr. Rabaza, Cuba)

satellites for aggressive purposes is contrary to a number of international treaties; and it could have harmful consequences for regional peace and security.

Mr. TÊTU (Canada): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to express the satisfaction of the Canadian delegation at seeing you once again in the Chair of this important Committee. We are certain that under your capable guidance the Committee will successfully complete the work before it. I assure you of my delegation's full co-operation to that end.

Since the Committee's last session several important developments have taken place in the Canadian space programme that support the Committee's goals in promoting international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Canada's space programme has developed throughout its long history on the basis of international co-operation. Extensive co-operation activities involve Canada with the United States of America, the European Space Agency and its member States, Japan, the Soviet Union and developing countries around the world.

To further and intensify that co-operative activity we have developed new instruments in the past year. In November 1989 the Prime Ministers of Canada and the Soviet Union signed an intergovernmental agreement on co-operation in space science and the peaceful uses of outer space. Also last year Canada and Japan established a space panel under a science and technology agreement to plan and co-ordinate co-operative space activities. The panel met for the first time in Vancouver in November 1989.

Within our domestic programme we have entered the construction phase for our first Earth observation satellite, RADARSAT, which is scheduled to be launched by the United States in 1994. RADARSAT, which was described in detail in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, will be a valuable Earth observation tool able to supply countries around the world with data useful for understanding and managing natural resources and the environment.

(Mr. Têtu, Canada)

Near the end of this year the second Canadian is scheduled to fly in space. Dr. Roberta Bondar of Canada's astronaut programme and German scientist Dr. Ulf Meyerbold will serve as prime payload specialists on the International Microgravity Laboratory I to be flown on a Space Shuttle flight expected to take place in December this year or January 1991.

Canada has a long history of co-operation in remote sensing with developing countries. One recent development was the understanding reached last November between the Canadian Space Agency and Brazil's national Institute of Space Research (INPE). As a result, Canada will provide Brazil with equipment to upgrade its remote sensing receiving station to enable it to receive data from the European Space Agency's ERS-1 radar remote sensing satellite. The Institute will later upgrade its station to receive RADARSAT data.

Turning now to the work of the Sub-Committees, our delegation is pleased to note that significant progress has been made. The Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee's Working Group on nuclear power sources (NPS) was created 12 years ago. Its chief agenda item has been consideration of how NPS can be used safely. The thorough work of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee allowed the Legal Sub-Committee to achieve consensus on principle 3 of the NPS principles, "Guidelines and criteria for safe use". My delegation has long held that principle 3 is the key element of the NPS principles. We believe that the willingness of members of the Committee to outline their views in both formal and informal consultations, including those associated with the Committee and those outside it, made possible this year's accomplishments.

The meeting of experts organized by the Federal Republic of Germany last fall was certainly important, because it allowed a thorough airing of opinions before this year's round of Sub-Committee meetings. We also believe that it would be

(Mr. Têtu, Canada)

useful for members of the Committee to continue informal consultations on outstanding issues, with a view to narrowing the differences that remain. To that end, our delegation has proposed that an informal meeting open to all interested delegations be held on the margins of the Committee meetings. This will allow a first exchange of views on the remaining outstanding principles and pave the way to a speedier adoption of those principles at the next session of the Legal Sub-Committee. In the meantime, our delegation stands ready to contribute to bridging the differences that might exist in order to bring this 12-year-old exercise to a successful end.

Our delegation will address the Sub-Committee's reports in greater detail later, but we should like briefly to mention two points now.

During consideration of the theme fixed for special attention at the last session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, "The use of space technology in terrestrial search and rescue and in disaster relief activities", the Sub-Committee had an opportunity to consider the international satellite search and rescue system known as COSPAS-SARSAT, established by Canada, France, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The system has saved hundreds of lives in Canada alone and reduced the costs of search and rescue operations by allowing much quicker location of people in distress. We know from direct experience how useful this system is, and support the recommendation of the Sub-Committee that Member States and relevant international organizations consider using COSPAS-SARSAT for their search and rescue activities.

(Mr. Têtu, Canada)

Finally, our delegation notes with satisfaction the growing attention being devoted to questions of space and environment in the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee. This is a logical outcome of the increasing concern with environmental questions around the world. It appears in two aspects: first, the use of space technologies to conduct research on environmental problems on Earth and to provide operational information used in managing natural resources; and, second, the consideration of the protection and preservation of the space environment. Our delegation looks forward to continuing these important discussions in the coming year.

The CHAIRMAN: Before concluding this item, I call on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. LOWELL (United States of America): I am sorry to have to speak at this late stage in our discussions. As the Committee is aware, we presented our views under item 3 earlier today, but I ask to speak now in exercise of the right of reply because of the very unfortunate fact that the representative of Cuba has seen fit to disrupt our discussions this afternoon with a wholly mendacious allegation against the activities of the United States Government. We reject that allegation. As all delegations, including that of Cuba, are aware, the activities of the United States Government in outer space are conducted in strict accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

I think it is particularly telling that this condemnation comes after Cuba has again been given observer status for this session of the Committee. I should only like to say that, in our opinion, this certainly represents a gross abuse of that status and one we will certainly take into account in considering future such requests.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 3, "General exchange of views".

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: I merely want to say that according to my count 28 delegations and four international governmental and non-governmental organizations have spoken in the course of the general exchange of views, which is somewhat below the number of delegations and organizations that spoke last year. I wish to share my concern with the Committee over that fact, and I appeal to members to make every effort to avail themselves of this opportunity of having a general exchange of views. Let me also say in passing that perhaps in future years better use of our total allotted time could be made, particularly during consideration of this item. This might of course also lead to a number of considerations on the working methods of the Committee, but let these remarks stand for the moment and let us perhaps consider how we can in the future make better and fuller use of the opportunity given to the Committee to address the more general aspects of our work.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: As I announced earlier, there will now be two presentations on remote sensing arranged by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. First, Dr. Yuri Koptef will speak on, "Exploration of the natural resources of the Earth and the ecological status on board the Mir orbital station". He will be followed by Dr. Yuri Kienko, who will speak on, "Remote sensing of the Earth from Space for studying and mapping of the natural and economic potential of the USSR".

As I said before, at the end of these presentations, the Committee will stand adjourned and proceed immediately to informal consultations on nuclear power sources.

(The Chairman)

The next meeting will then be held tomorrow morning at 10.30 a.m., to start consideration of agenda item 4.

There followed a technical presentation.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.

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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 7 June 1990, at 10.30 a.m.

Acting Chairman: Mr. MUNTEANU (Romania)

- Organization of work
- Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Munteanu (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN: Today, the Committee will have two technical presentations on remote sensing, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This morning, following the list of speakers on agenda item 4, Mr. Charles Williams, President of the Earth Observation Satellite Company (EOSAT), operator of the United States LANDSAT system, will make a presentation on the status of the LANDSAT programme. Following the list of speakers for this afternoon's meeting, Mr. Gerard Brachet, Director General of SPOT Image, will make a presentation on the applications of the SPOT satellite in the service of development.

WAYS AND MEANS OF MAINTAINING OUTER SPACE FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES

The CHAIRMAN: Members wishing to speak on agenda item 4 should inscribe their names on the Secretariat's list. The first speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, upon whom I now call.

Mr. KHABIROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)(interpretation from Russian): First, we should like to congratulate you, Sir, the Ambassador of Romania, on your election to the post of Vice-Chairman of our Committee. We are pleased to see you presiding over our deliberations, and we wish you every success in carrying out your lofty responsibilities.

Today, we are beginning our consideration of the priority item on our agenda, "Ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes". Its timeliness and importance are obvious. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to say that if we can arrive at mutually acceptable solutions on this basic issue the way would then be open for a constructive dialogue aimed at finding the most effective ways of developing international co-operation in the peaceful exploration of outer space,

(Mr. Khabirov, USSR)

for the benefit and in the interests of peoples of all States, and we will have established all the conditions necessary to pool the resources and intellectual potential of all States in the field of outer space.

We agree with the statement made in the general exchange of views by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, who said that the peaceful uses of outer space are a basic element of international co-operation. The significance of the peaceful use of outer space, as that representative quite rightly pointed out, has grown considerably larger and will continue to grow, especially in light of the major changes that have taken place in the sphere of outer space. We agree with that appraisal.

Having said that, we should like to mention the major contribution our Committee has made in establishing an international legal framework for outer space and in developing relations between States in that sphere. We believe that that contribution, based, as the representative of the United Kingdom mentioned in his statement, on five major international agreements, on relevant resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, on two major international conferences on outer space and on other measures, testifies to the broad opportunities open to our Committee.

I shall not dwell in detail on the peaceful initiatives of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with regard to outer-space issues. They are well known. I shall note only that at the negotiating table we have put forward proposals which, if accepted, could weigh heavily in preventing the extension of the arms race to outer space and ensuring its peaceful uses. In particular, we are talking about broad-based programmes of joint and practical activities by States in outer space and about the idea of setting up a world space organization, about proposals to conclude treaties banning the emplacement of any type of weaponry in outer space

(Mr. Khabirov, USSR)

and banning the use of force in outer space and from outer space to Earth. We are talking about the establishment of a system of international control for the maintenance of outer space for peaceful purposes and about proposals to develop a comprehensive régime of peaceful activity in outer space, an initiative proposed by the President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev, at a meeting of the General Assembly in 1988.

Lastly, we are talking about the proposal to open outer space made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR in February of this year at Ottawa, the so-called open skies proposal. In clarifying that initiative, the Minister stressed the need for the urgent development of a system of controls over outer-space activities for all States. Mr. Shevardnadze said:

> "We must create a situation in which States would not be able to launch unknown objects into outer space. Here, we need a kind of ecological outer-space expertise to deal with everything destined for outer space."

In our opinion the realization of the open skies proposal would be a major step in confidence-building among States in the realm of outer space. The achievement of that goal would assist in the implementation of the other proposals we have made for an international inspectorate of outer space that would provide for the registration of vehicles launched into or placed in outer space. That proposal for an international inspectorate of outer space would be wholly in keeping with the proposal made a few years ago by France. The consideration of agenda items to ensure and strengthen confidence-building measures in the realm of outer space might be one of the areas in which our Committee might work on a priority basis.

(Mr. Khabirov, USSR)

We continue to believe that the Committee should agree by consensus to consider some of aforementioned proposals. During the general exchange of views a good deal was said about the role of the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that its work and the owrk of our Committee might, in fact, be complementary and lead to close co-operation among those two bodies, for we proceed from the premise that nothing should be done that could be detrimental to the work of the Conference. The common denominator would be a comprehensive and multilateral plan drawn up by various States to cover the areas of disarmament in outer space and the use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

In putting forward those proposals we would like to make ourselves very clear: we are not attempting to create confrontation. On the contrary, we are attempting to avoid confrontational situations in the Committee. Our only desire is to set up a constructive and businesslike dialogue so that we may arrive at mutually acceptable decisions. Thus, at the Committee's last session the delegation of the Soviet Union spoke in favour of the Committee's achieving greater progress in its work on the priority item on its agenda, and the presence of consensus elements in the Committee's report was evidence of that. At this session, too, we are also proposing that we set our differences aside for the time being and, in the interests of our common cause, attempt to discern the elements that bind us together.

(Mr. Khabirov, USSR)

In our view, there is a natural relationship - or at least a correlation - between this priority agenda item and new trends in the work of the Legal Sub-Committee on legal aspects of the principle by which outer space research should be carried out in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of developing countries. Given that relationship, we call upon our colleagues to ponder this possibility, which, to our mind, could open the way to constructive dialogue on this priority item.

In the context of the item on ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, we attach special significance to the strengthening and development of international co-operation in space exploration. In that connection, developing bilateral co-operation on space matters is among our country's priorities, as reflected in the conclusion by the Soviet Union during the past year of an intergovernmental agreement on co-operation in outer space with France, Canada and the People's Republic of China.

Of late we have been able to observe intensified European co-operation in the most varied aspects of science and technology, including outer space. In that regard, we attach great importance to the 25 April 1990 signing in Paris of an agreement between the Government of the USSR and the European Space Agency (ESA) on co-operation in outer space. Based on the need to maintain outer space as a peaceful environment for peaceful co-operation, and in an attempt to develop and expand mutually advantageous co-operation - as mentioned in the preamble to that agreement - the USSR and the ESA have agreed on co-operative efforts in such areas as study of the solar system, space astronomy and astrophysics, Earth observation, space biology and medicine, to name but a few. In that connection, the parties to the agreement emphasized that such co-operation would be an important step towards the establishment of a European co-operative effort in the sciences, and would be

(Mr. Khabirov, USSR)

to the benefit of all peoples the world over. We are convinced that this innovative agreement reflects the dynamics of change now under way in Europe and goes one step further in laying the foundations for a common European home. Its political echo will be heard in many countries.

Owing to concrete processes in development today, the interests of States and groups of States are becoming increasingly united, and the international community is moving ever closer to the universalization of co-operation in outer space.

Today, as we witness radical changes leading to global warming - an issue that was mentioned by most participants in our general exchange of views - we need to become more open in the area of outer space exploration and to co-ordinate scientific outer space programmes, involving in them a greater number of countries, international organizations, enterprises, scholars and experts.

A good example of such co-operation could be provided by a manned exploratory expedition to Mars. The scientific and technological potential which has been accumulated and the level of development of space craft technology, especially on the part of the USSR and the United States, enable us to say that such a programme could be realized in the coming decade. In our view, the results of Mars exploration could be used for exclusively peaceful purposes, and should become the achievement of all mankind. On that basis, we should consider a Mars exploration programme for the entire world community. As we see it, the programme should go beyond national borders to become the first inter-State outer space programme. Perhaps it could be called "Mission to Planet Mars". The United Nations too could play a role in carrying it out. There is no doubt that with good will and participation in Mission to Planet Mars by all countries - outer space countries and non-outer space countries, and both economically advanced and developing countries - that programme could achieve success in an effective time-frame with results that would benefit every individual on Earth.

Mr. BAJ (Hungary): Peace on Earth and in outer space is of vital importance to the Hungarian people, as we have learned from history. For that reason, Hungary wants to contribute, in a manner commensurate with its abilities, to the maintenance of outer space for peaceful purposes. This is necessary because of the incongruity between the sophisticated instruments orbiting in space and the existence of mankind's global economic and ecological problems on Earth.

My delegation thinks that one of the fundamental ways to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes is to widen and strengthen co-operation among various nations and countries. In the recent period Hungarian space activities have been based entirely on international co-operation, in which the Intercosmos programme plays a fundamental role. In the framework of that programme, close and fruitful co-operation has developed among Hungary, the Soviet Union and other countries.

In the course of devising instruments for various space probes, Hungary has also developed close links with scientists and space experts from Austria, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America. In the future Hungary would like to improve co-operation and look for new links with other national and international organizations.

Therefore, over the past year Hungarian delegations visited the headquarters of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States (NASA) in order to place existing contacts on a higher level.

(Mr. Baj, Hungary)

Looking for new opportunities in the field of international relations, a Hungarian expert group, invited by the Chinese Academy of Space Technology, conducted fruitful negotiations with Chinese space experts in Beijing and Shanghai a week ago.

Hungary has had very good experience and achieved tangible results in carrying out joint programmes with various national and international organizations. Therefore, the Hungarian delegation considers International Space Year as a unique opportunity to test the effectiveness and strength of its international links and co-operation. Furthermore, my delegation believes that International Space Year should be a milestone in working out a new mechanism of global co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Finally, the Hungarian delegation would like to express its hope that in the future the sophisticated space and ground equipment, as well as certain international resources, as components of the peace dividend emerging as a result of the accelerating disarmament process will be involved in the solution of the global economic and ecological problems of planet Earth.

Mr. CHANDRASEKHAR (India): The Indian delegation considers that the work on agenda item 4 represents the very essence of the Committee's purpose. We strongly believe that the exploration and utilization of outer space cannot be for the benefit and in the interests of all countries unless outer space is maintained for peaceful purposes. We are greatly concerned that certain developments that are taking place to escalate an arms race into outer space are seriously threatening the very basis and the goal of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes. Our Comittee and its Sub-Committees have played a significant role in the evolution of an international legal framework the very basis of which was to ensure that the exploration and use of outer space was carried out for peaceful purposes and for the benefit and in the interests of all countries. The development, testing and

(Mr. Chandrasekhar, India)

deployment of arms in outer space present a grave danger to humanity as a whole and need to be prevented. They would add a new dimension to the arms race already existing and, we believe, also lead to destabilization and seriously affecting international co-operation. In many other ways also, they would affect the pursuit of space activities by several States for peaceful purposes. They pose a threat to the preservation of the space environment and add to the problems of debris and pollution which cause harmful interference to space objects meant for peaceful and beneficial applications. We recognize that the legal régime applicable to outer space has played an important role in promoting international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space among many countries and we advocate that this needs to be strengthened to prevent activities that will pose a danger to peace in space and on Earth. We recognize, too, the need for mounting greater international co-operation to extend the benefits of outer space to all countries, and in this context it is urgent that we appeal against all efforts that would result in the escalation of the arms race into outer space. The goal of ensuring that outer space is used for peaceful purposes calls for parallel efforts in multiple bodies, both bilateral and multilateral. All these efforts need to be encouraged and to complement one another towards finding solutions on an urgent basis.

We are aware that efforts are being made in the Conference on Disarmament for the prevention of an arms race in outer space that are closely interlinked with the subject of our agenda item. Success in achieving results and ensuring that outer space is maintained for peaceful purposes depends on serious efforts being made in all bodies. However, over the last few years we have been unable to reach a common understanding in our Committee on how we are to deal with this agenda item, clearly identifying the issues and moving further. There are several roles our Committee has to play to achieve the final objective of the work under agenda item 4. The Committee could, by consensus, designate the priority areas of concern in relation

(Mr. Chandrasekhar, India)

to maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes with regard to its own work and that of other multilateral and bilateral bodies. The Committee could also consider ways by which it could consolidate and reinforce the existing legal régime related to outer space. It could further work on ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the legal régime to ensure the maintenance of outer space for peaceful purposes. There are also issues of ensuring strict compliance with existing agreements in this area, both bilateral and multilateral. The Committee has also an important role to play in promoting greater international co-operation, which can build further confidence and assist in creating an appropriate atmosphere of mutual trust and co-operation. Several constructive proposals under this item have been put forward by many representatives in this body for consideration under this item; for example, the proposals just made on the subject by the representatives of the Soviet Union and Hungary merit serious consideration.

Let us not underestimate the speed with which space technology could lead to mutual destruction and the worsening of the problem of maintaining peace if we do not direct it with common wisdom and a sense of urgency.

We would not like to repeat again the several avenues for increasing international co-operation which our delegation and many others have presented in the past. It is now time for us to consider concrete steps that would substantially contribute to ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes.

Mr. MATUS (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): As we pointed out at the beginning of this session, our delegation considers that the atmosphere of détente that we are now experiencing in international relations probably constitutes a good basis for making concrete and specific progress on this occasion on the item before us.

(Mr. Matus, Chile)

Last year, the majority indicated that it recognizaed the consensus formula achieved on that occasion with regard to this crucial aspect of the agenda of the outer space Committee. That agreement, as is known, explicitly recognized the great importance of respect for the principles of international law and drew attention to the dangers posed by the arms race. In its recent statement the Soviet delegation emphasized both of these aspects along the same lines.

(Mr. Matus, Chile)

Thus, we believe that the time has come for us to analyse the links between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and other international bodies devoted to similar issues. We refer specifically to the natural relationship that exists between this Committee and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, to which the representative of India just referred.

Indeed, we are frequently told that the multilateral forum entrusted with the consideration of issues related with the military uses of outer space should be the Conference on Disarmament alone. Although it is true that the Conference does have jurisdiction in that area, it is none the less true that the item is also on this Committee's agenda. What is more, its inclusion on the agenda was not merely the product of an accident or of the wishes of certain members. It is the result of a specific mandate from the General Assembly, contained in paragraph 26 of resolution 44/46.

On the other hand, it was stated yesterday that the Committee had no power or competence to make any pronouncements on that subject. However, a correct interpretation of General Assembly 1348 (XIII) of 1958, quoted by that delegation, leads us to conclude that the Committee does have a sufficient mandate to carry out a comprehensive consideration of that important topic. Indeed, the resolution itself recognizes that, in order for space activities to be carried out peacefully, we need to establish, among other things, a body such as the Committee to oversee the implementation of that goal.

Thus, the Committee not only can but also should take up and consider the question. To do otherwise would mean disregarding such express directives of the highest body of the United Nations as General Assembly resolutions 1348 (XIII) and 44/46, to which I have just referred.

(Mr. Matus, Chile)

Also, from a practical point of view, there are arguments in support of the consolidation of a link between the Conference on Disarmament and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In that regard, I should highlight the fact that the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament is already very full, preventing it from dealing properly with each and every one of the aspects within its purview. In addition, an Ad Hoc Committee on disarmament in space was set up in the Conference in 1985. As we know, that Ad Hoc Committee, for reasons which it is not now appropriate to describe, has not made any great substantive progress. In view of the situation, it seems to us very useful to request from the Conference a report on the number of meetings held to date by that Ad Hoc Committee and on any possible progress and negotiations that have been held therein. That is an official proposal by our delegation, and we hope that it will be taken up at this time.

Despite the limitations I have described, and by way of contributing effectively to the work of this Committee, Chile has been participating as an observer in its work since 1988 and has placed before it a substantive document on the subject, contained in document A/44/134, dated 23 February 1989.

Finally, a last argument in favour of establishing a link between the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament is that it makes sense. In this case, that means acknowledging the simple circumstance that, if a Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space exists, and there is a specific priority item on the agenda of that Committee for maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes, no one can maintain that the Committee has nothing to say on the subject.

Mr. BOYER (France) (interpretation from French): I should like at the outset to take this opportunity to address to you personally, Sir, the congratulations that the French delegation addressed to the Chairman and the Bureau yesterday. I should like in particular to express our great pleasure at seeing you presiding today, and no doubt in the future, over our discussions.

The French delegation's statement will concern only procedure. We have listened with great interest to the statements made by the representatives of the USSR, Hungary, India and Chile.

As far as the proposals for disarmament or the prevention of an arms race in outer space are concerned, the French delegation by no means prejudges the merits of those prosposals in its statement. Thus, we are not contesting the substantive soundness of the proposals that have been put forward. We simply wish to recall France's position on the reciprocal competence of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Conference on Disarmament.

Since in paragraph 5 of resolution 44/112, the General Assembly

> "Reiterates that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects",

we feel that it has thus given an exclusive mandate to the Conference on Disarmament and its Ad Hoc Committee for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Furthermore, we interpret paragraph 26 of resolution 44/46, in which the General Assembly

> "Requests the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes",

(Mr. Boyer, France)

as inviting a debate on the exclusively peaceful uses of outer space, without infringing on the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament.

Thus, in our view, there is no question of removing those subjects from the competence of the United Nations, but of ensuring that they will be studied by the competent bodies.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to the Romanian delegation and me personally.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish simply to clarify some ideas with regard to the proposal my delegation has just made.

First, my delegation has never denied that the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the only multilateral forum to negotiate fundamental disarmament questions. However, since we are very conscious of proposals made by other delegations in the past on effective ways to restructure and improve our Committee's work, we should like to know whether it would not be useful to see how the Ad Hoc Committee on disarmament in outer space has been conducting its substantive work in Geneva. I believe it would be very useful, because, although we do not claim to attach to this item any negotiating character, I do not know whether the representative of France wanted to deny that this Committee has a role to play.

How can we speak of peaceful aspects without considering others - those involved in the arms race - that will substantially hinder or block those peaceful aspects? It seems to us that there is a lack of logic in the argument.

How can we deal in a vacuum with the peaceful aspects of outer space without knowing what elements would prevent the full development of space activities? I am thinking particularly of the developing countries, which are most affected, since funds are often used for missions whose aims are often not peaceful. We do not know, since the Convention on registration of space objects does not require any indication of their purpose. In this context, I refer to a proposal France made some years ago, to expand the Convention on registration to give more detail on the type of activity - whether peaceful or non-peaceful - to be carried out by space objects. I do not use the words "military" or "non-military", because some missions of a military character clearly contribute to stability, and therefore also have a peaceful character.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

Through you, Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the Chief of the Outer Space Affairs Division whether our Committee does not have the competence to request a detailed report from the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and specifically from its Ad Hoc Committee dealing with disarmament in outer space, about the work done by this Ad Hoc Committee.

My experience is that we have often had distributed in the Committee documents from other United Nations Committees or subsidiary bodies to enrich our work and ensure that our debates may be more fruitful. Therefore, I should like the Chief to clarify the matter.

Mr. BASAVE (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The present session of our Committee is taking place at a time of profound structural changes in international relations. The East-West confrontation that marked the so-called cold war era is, fortunately, giving way to a period of dialoque and negotiation. The process of détente that began in 1987 with the signing of the first agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union for the elimination of 50 per cent of their nuclear weapons stationed on European soil offers a valuable opportunity once and for all to begin a genuine process of disarmament on land, on the seas and in outer space.

The disarmament agreements reached during the recent summit meeting of President Gorbachev and President Bush, although modest, are encouraging, because they establish a commitment to continue negotiations on conventional and nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, with regard to space weapons they only signed a declaration concerning future negotiations, and military activities are still going on in outer space. It has been estimated that three out of four of the thousands of satellites launched into outer space have military purposes, being intended to obtain information on possible military objectives.

(Mr. Basave, Mexico)

The delegation of Mexico is very concerned that the Strategic Defence Initiative of the United States, commonly known as Star Wars, has involved the investment of astronomical sums, while a large part of mankind continues to suffer hunger and extreme poverty.

We have always insisted that the 53 members of this Committee have a fundamental duty to promote international co-operation in outer space and, as mandated by resolution 38/80, adopted by the General Assembly in 1983, to give priority consideration to questions relating to the militarization of outer space, bearing in mind the need to co-ordinate the efforts of the Committee and those of the Committee on Disarmament, now the Conference on Disarmament. Likewise, in 1982 the General Assembly, in resolution 37/83, requested the Conference on Disarmament to consider as a matter of priority the question of preventing an arms race in outer space and to establish an ad hoc working group to negotiate an agreement or agreements to that end.

Unfortunately, despite the repeated appeals of the international community, neither the Conference on Disarmament nor this Committee have been able to tackle the question in a responsible manner. It has not been possible in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to reach agreement on a negotiating mandate for the Ad Hoc Committee charged with dealing with the matter, owing to the opposition of a single delegation. In this Committee a group of delegations has tried to take up this delicate and urgent matter through a restructuring of our work.

My delegation regards it as contradictory that, while the present process of international détente originated in disarmament agreements, at the United Nations we cannot make any progress in dealing with disarmament, and particularly the demilitarization of outer space, which of course is indispensable in order to guarantee that the exploration and use of outer space are carried out for exclusively peaceful purposes and to the benefit of all mankind.

(Mr. Basave, Mexico)

How much longer shall we go on repeating this ritual year after year in this Committee and in the Conference on Disarmament? When shall we finally show the political will to make progress in the promotion of genuine space exploration programmes to support the development efforts of all countries, and particularly the developing countries? In my delegation's opinion, we should be committing a serious mistake if we did not take the precious opportunity offered by the current international climate to decide once and for all constructively and honestly to take up this delicate question, co-ordinating our efforts with those of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament.

This morning we have heard interesting proposals from the representative of Chile, and Mexico feels that they should be given due attention, because they could constructively contribute to our consideration of this item.

Mr. LOWELL (United States of America): My delegation had not intended to speak this morning, but we feel compelled to do so because there seems to be a certain amount of confusion - as a matter of fact, a great deal of confusion - as to what we are to discuss under this item. The interventions this morning have only confirmed our long-held view that agenda item 4 suffers from a serious identity crisis, because clearly this is not a question of disarmament and this Committee has no mandate to deal with questions of disarmament. The historical record makes that very clear.

An earlier speaker this morning raised the question of resolution 1348 (XIII), a resolution about which my delegation knows a great deal. For the edification of the members of the Committee, let me give some background as to resolution 1348 (XIII) and what was intended for this Committee vis-à-vis disarmament.

When this Committee was first proposed, it was clear that it would not be playing a role in disarmament. In September 1958, the United States proposed to the Secretary-General that we include in the agenda of the General Assembly an item entitled "Programme for international co-operation in the field of outer space". When we made that proposal, we forwarded an explanatory memorandum in which we noted the following:

> "The potential uses of outer space for destructive purposes are only too apparent. On the other hand, the potential uses of outer space for peaceful purposes can enrich the lives of all men, and urgent steps are therefore needed to lay a solid basis for international co-operation in the development of the peaceful uses of outer space. Such steps can be taken while parallel efforts are being made to conclude meaningful agreement on the disarmament aspects of outer space."

(Mr. Lowell, United States)

So from our standpoint it was clear that those parallel efforts on disarmament were not to be undertaken in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. In that memorandum we went on to explain that

> "the General Assembly should begin to take necessary steps to further those interests by declaring itself on the separability of the question of the peaceful uses of outer space from that of disarmament by preparing for further careful consideration of this vital but complex matter to the establishment of an ad hoc committee to make the necessary detailed studies and recommendations as to what specific steps the Assembly might take to further progress in this field".

The General Assembly then went on to declare itself on this question when, on 13 December 1958, it adopted its resolution 1348 (XIII), which established the Ad Hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. The Ad Hoc Committee established by the General Assembly in 1958 was made permanent in 1959.

To summarize, then, it is the view of the United States that the appropriate body to deal with disarmament aspects of outer space remains the Conference on Disarmament, not this Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: If I may say so, I take it as a good omen at the outset of my activities in this Committee that we are progressing towards edification on the purposes of the Committee and its specific attributes.

Mr. KHABIROV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): My delegation also would like to recall that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space has played an outstanding role in limiting the non-peaceful uses of outer space, in particular by preparing the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. In fact, it was our

(Mr. Khabirov, USSR)

Committee that drew up norms banning the emplacement in outer space of nuclear or other types of weapons of mass destruction and that established that the Moon and other celestial bodies were to be used solely for peaceful purposes. This is purely a disarmament matter, and denial of our Committee's usefulness and potential in this sphere would hardly be appropriate.

Because of its mandate and its accumulated practical experience, we feel this Committee is indissolubly linked with the sphere of the peaceful uses of outer space and the non-placement of weaponry there and ensuring that outer space is used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

We agree that these questions are at present being considered by the Conference on Disarmament. But we are facing a situation in which some representatives believe specific proposals put forward by various delegations as part of a priority agenda item would inevitably affect the sphere of disarmament, which supposedly falls solely within the purview of the Conference on Disarmament, and the Conference on Disarmament alone.

The Soviet delegation has already repeatedly pointed out that we cannot agree to this way of looking at the matter. But at the same time we emphasize that we cannot fail to face up to it. The Soviet delegation sees no insurmountable wall, so to speak, between our Committee and the Conference on Disarmament, but we do understand that such an obstacle can be overcome only with the general agreement of the entire Committee.

Once again I would emphasize that the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the Conference on Disarmament should be complementary, while again stressing that interaction between them is possible only as a result of consensus.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): We should like to address two or three matters.

First, we seek a response to the question we have asked of the Director of the Outer Space Affairs Division concerning the possibility of having a status report on what is going on in the Ad Hoc Committee on disarmament in space. From what some representatives have said, some very fruitful and successful negotiations are under way in that Committee.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

Since all delegations members of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space are not members of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and since the members of the latter have a veto power that prevents many of the members of this Committee from having access to or participating in the work of the Conference as members or as observers, it seems only logical that we should, when discussing this agenda item, have the information we are asking for. It is factual information, and we feel that we might easily obtain it from the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva through the Outer Space Affairs Division.

We are in full agreement with the arguments advanced by the Soviet Union. We are not denying the mandate of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We regard the Conference's mandate as fundamental and primordial. That, however, does not preclude the possibility of our debating the subject here, and we do not see how we can discuss the question of the peaceful uses of outer space without touching upon the very elements that prevent such peaceful uses. I feel that that is a matter of minimal logic and commonsense.

In order not to prolong this discussion, I would only say that we are requesting an answer to our question, and we would ask that the debate not proceed until we have received one from the Outer Space Affairs Division.

The CHAIRMAN: We shall, perhaps at the conclusion of this afternoon's meeting, be able to inform the representative of Chile about our efforts to contact the Chief of the Outer Space Affairs Division and about the possibility of getting factual information from him with regard to the question that has been raised. We cannot take any decision until we have contacted that body, and at that time the Committee will be informed of everything the Secretariat has been able to learn.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I apologize for speaking again, but my delegation is not clear whether the Outer Space Affairs Division will request the information we seek from the Conference on Disarmament as

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

soon as possible or not. That is the minimum we are requesting. Or is there some doubt whether the Division is competent to make such a request? In my delegation's view it is quite clear that the Outer Space Affairs Division is fully competent and empowered to request information on this or any other agenda item from other United Nations bodies that are either directly or indirectly concerned with related subjects in this Committee, and in this context my delegation is prepared to wait for the answer.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall now call upon the Secretary of the Committee, who will be able to furnish some information on this matter.

Mr. JASENTULIYANA (Secretary of the Committee): With regard to the request made by the delegation of Chile, it was not quite clear to me in the first instance whether the representative was asking if the Committee was competent to ask the Conference on Disarmament for a report - that is the way the interpretation came through. I would like to clarify this with the representative of Chile. Perhaps he had something else in mind.

If my understanding of the question is correct - namely, whether the Committee is competent to do so - that is a matter that is up to the Committee. If the Committee wishes to ask the Conference on Disarmament to make a special report to it on this item, it is obviously free to do so based on a consensus basis.

However, as I understood from his subsequent statement, the representative of Chile was perhaps requesting that the Secretariat provide the information with regard to the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament that is available as of now. The Secretariat will make every effort to make the report of the Conference on Disarmament available to members of this Committee as soon as possible. I am not sure how many copies are available here in New York, but if they are here we will distribute them right away and, if not, I will address a request to Geneva to send copies as soon as possible for immediate distribution.

Mr. LOWELL (United States of America): My delegation is a bit perplexed by this most recent discussion concerning the availability of documents, because it is my understanding that the official documents of the Conference on Disarmament are readily available to Member States through normal United Nations distribution channels.

As a rule, when the Committee or its Sub-Committees ask for certain documents to be made available during our deliberations it is to a specific end, one with direct relevance to the issue at hand, with direct relevance to questions on which we are trying to come to some conclusions.

I must say that, in our view, the distribution of these documents from the Conference on Disarmament makes no contribution to questions we are considering at hand. I thought we had made that quite clear. We would be hesitant to ask the Secretariat to use its time now in distributing documents that we do not consider to be germane when the Secretariat already has enough to do in providing us with support services in our normal course of work.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile)(interpretation from Spanish): Very briefly, I would like to say that my delegation insists on its request. Since we have traditionally and historically worked by consensus in the Committee, we understand that that consensus covers all members of the Committee, and we do feel that it is relevant to have that documentation available in order to remove the mysterious veil that shrouds the possibly successful negotiations that are going on in the Ad Hoc Committee on disarmament in outer space. We believe that transparency and the free flow of information are possible, and we feel it is perfectly feasible to have that information and we would like to have the document as soon as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: If no other delegation wishes to speak this morning, we will now proceed to this morning's presentation.

Mr. Charles Williams, President of Earth Observation Satellite Company (EOSAT), United States, will make a presentation on the United States LANDSAT Programme.

There followed a technical presentation.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.